

Why Berlin analogy hard to duplicate; Berlin institutions may be inappropriate.

- 1) Berlin problem outside NATO area (like some other problems, but unlike attack on NATO nation). (and rationale for keeping out of NATO)
- 2) Sub-group established as result of WWII, Berlin crisis of 1948--prior to NATO.
- 3) Real crisis--Russian pressure (evolution of system as direct result)--vital interests--highest stakes.
- 4) Day-to-day interaction with Russians; many small choices, decisions, flaps--keeping system exercised and busy.
- 5) High-level concern in each country.
- 6)

But: attractive aspects of Berlin experience:

- 1) Useful exchange of views, coordination.
- 2) Realistic, coordinated plans: as basis for ~~discussion~~ communication, starting-points in actual crises.
- 3) Institutions for quick consultation; personal relationships.
- 4) Stimulus to internal country planning; in particular, to interdepartmental discussion, planning, coordination; high-level attention and resolution.
- 5) Improved communications
- 6) Deployments, preparations.

None of above considerations applies with other contingencies.

- 1) Hypothetical, future.
- 2) Regarded by many as unlikely. (even though more likely than big attack).
- 3) Regarded by many as not calling for NATO response (and even interest in inhibiting response by others).
- 4) Lack of stimulus from Russians; either acute, or day-to-day.
- 5) Little prospect of high-level involvement, attention.

CRISES

Effects of need for speed (some desired, in light of other considerations: e.g., privacy, secrecy, consideration or preparation or use of "radical" alternatives which others would oppose considering in less-apparently-emergency conditions; hence, may be tendency to "wait for crisis," use crises, postpone considerations until a crisis).

Distinguish between:

- x) actions that can be
- a) thought of fast
- b) planned, prepared, approved fast
- c) started fast
- d) effective fast

Need for highly focused information and advice:

- 1) info "relevant to" immediate action alternatives, and immediate "problem"
- 2) advice on immediate alternatives: including feasibility, and invention of alternatives--relevant to "immediate problem," short-term objectives

But: small number of specialists right know this specialized, highly relevant, critical information. And limited number of people who know who might know this info--i.e., who to call.

Knowledge of what info and advice is relevant requires certain information, some of which may be withheld, or which may be hard to transmit in time:

- a) immediate problem; triggering events; attitudes of key elements, allies, staff, enemy leaders, societal groups;
- b) high-level view of immediate objectives at stake; of important constraints, "secondary criteria."
- c) certain alternatives being considered (critical info can't be specified it out this; and uncertainties, ranges, or shades may be expressed in ways that are unuseful or misleading in light of "hidden" alternatives).

Moreover, problem of getting this highly focused information and advice may be constrained not only by difficulty in finding right people and framing adequate questions in time, but by problem of concealing these hidden factors from staff, or advisors: keeping them from guessing these considerations, or even the "true purpose" of the questions. Problem: QUESTIONS ARE INFORMATIVE (McKay).

One result: reliance on "briefing book" entries, books that are maintained up to date on routine basis (can be consulted without being informative as to hidden factors; or can be brought up to date); reliance on trusted advisors who can be told critical elements, even though they are not specialists on data ("They can be told the questions, safely; even though they may not be best at answering.")

Problem of competition for solution of crisis problem --hence, need for secrecy, speed, closed staff--increased by emergency nature of situation:

- 1) situation invites promotion of radical solutions, by groups in public, Congress, allies, normally quiescent because their preferred courses so obviously inappropriate or unsupportable in normal periods; i.e., crisis activates certain political pressures, stimulates pressure for radical turns;
- 2) those with "solutions" will see them as highly important and urgent; they will use extraordinary means to have them considered, adopted. (rather than "letting Lyndon do it.")

Why do passers-by simply ignore a clanging burglar alarm; or air raid siren (or fall-out warning)?

WARNING AND SURPRISE

Certain surprise-prone events have following properties:

- 1) Prior probability is extremely, extremely low (e.g., attack on Pearl Harbor, attack through Ardennes, missiles in Cuba).
(in fact, possibility may not have been thought of at all: either by any individual, or by a bureaucratic level: or may have been dropped from consideration and not recovered. In this case, no incoming data will raise its probability--which is effectively zero--until some data--such as the attack itself--"suggests"/generates the hypothesis and simultaneously gives it near-certain probability))
- 2) Most relevant data is quite ambiguous: doesn't raise prob appreciably.
- 3) Certain relevant data appears--e.g., to the layman, or even to the insider who is not a specialist in this source or who lacks certain special information--to have extremely great evidential weight: enough to convert even a very low prior prob to a high prob, or at least, to a prob high enough to trigger preparatory or "insurance" or information-gathering actions.
But for reasons known only to the specialist, or for reasons of special collateral information known at the time to those who must interpret or act on signals, even these signals are fairly ambiguous; their evidential weight is much reduced, and is inadequate to raise a very low prob to levels that would trigger appropriate preparation or response.
- 4) It may also be true that the costs or risks of ~~any~~ "appropriate" actions (i.e., appropriate if hypothesis were true, or highly likely) are seen as very high--perhaps much higher than "public" would think, for reasons not known or not weighed heavily by public.

The effect is that signals/evidence which may appear--to the public, or even to a relative insider (or even to the receiver himself, when he reviews the evidence later with some loss of memory)--as "unequivocal warning", simply stir no significant or adequate response whatever: because they lacked, at the time, the ~~moderate weight~~ very great evidential weight needed to convert a very low probability into a very high probability.

Any one of these factors may be the critical one; and any one, or more, may have a value which is hidden to the observer or the public, because of deliberate secrecy, or lack of expertise or experience, or lack of particular information bearing only on this one incident. The effect of this difference in appreciation is that the resultant surprise seems surprising: inexplicable (and gives rise to suspicions of total incompetence, irresponsibility, or hidden and sinister motives; this interpretation is always risked, in fact is likely, as a result of investigation into "surprising surprises": the investigation is likely to turn up some "warning" that will appear to someone as "so unequivocal" that it suggests or proves to them the culpability of those who failed to respond.)

Examples:

Crises are situations of emergency decision-making: of search for a policy, with high stakes at risk, under an urgent deadline.

1. Why is the choice being made under emergency conditions? Why don't they know--why didn't they decide earlier--what they want to do...or what the problem is, the relevant objectives, the alternatives? Why are they working at night, over weekends, bypassing normal channels?

2. These questions are asked not only later, by historians and political scientists, but at the time, by Congress, the public, the newspapers. The wrong answers will lead to a mark of "failure" of the Administration: failure to foresee, to prepare, to forestall. This character of a test affects the stakes for the decision-maker: (a) if he succeeds, if he "saves" the situation or avoids significant loss, he will get no bonus for doing it in as a last-minute save; he may pay a penalty anyway, or forego some credit for the success, because of the earlier failures, of foresight, administration, informing the public, etc (so he has an incentive to strive to offset this--while in the spotlight--by notably graceful or dramatic "management" during the crisis). (b) more importantly, if he "fails"--if the outcome is bad--there will be a presumption that he could have done much better if he had dealt with the problem in a more timely fashion (unless there are very persuasive reasons to believe that "the problem could not have been foreseen, or prepared for, earlier").

In other words, experiencing the problem as a crisis--or as a surprise--tends to heighten the cost of failure (i.e., the cost to the decision-maker, not the cost to the nation); to avoid failure, to lower the probability of failure, he may be tempted to pay a price he wouldn't otherwise pay; for what will publicly be defined as "success," or to accept risks of worse failure to lower the overall probability of any failure. (Taylor on December 20). Thus, "surprise" or "crisis" may create a divergence between "public" stakes (as they might appear to someone in the same spot who was in no way responsible for events or preparations or estimates leading up to the emergency situation. Because of responsibility for the past, given individuals have special motives: to conceal, to offset, to excal, to avoid, to produce, to justify. And in particular, those who are responsible for there being a crisis have special motives not to add failure in the crisis to their failure to avoid the crisis.

Flexibility: If info will be available — as a matter of choice, yes at a cost — then one has two choices:

a) whether, and how much, info to buy; how much to pay for given signals, tests, observations.

b) whether and how much flexibility to buy — to prepare to exploit more info.

Buying more flexibility ^(may?) raises the value of (given) info. _{or additional}

Buying more info raises the value of given (additional) flexibility.

If no info is available, flex. has no value.

If given info is available (i.e. signals are coming, without cost), then buying flexibility "until" ~~PV of flex.~~ until this no longer increases expected value.

? "Postponing decision" is (for the purpose of ?) acquiring info, or of ~~acq.~~ using info - to - be - acquired. (or allowing for change in ^{values} ~~model~~ _{attention} of one's own opinions or values, through analysis; or, changes in opinion/values due to reflection + analysis).

"Flex" "allows us" to postpone decision.

Value of information

The zero-sum game assumptions underestimate the value of information (intelligence) on the intentions of the enemy--even if he is rational (but believes, perhaps, that we may not be; or that we may believe he is not; or that...), but especially if there is some uncertainty as to his view of the payoffs. OUR OWN PAYOFFS REPRESENT A DIFFICULT TASK OF CONSTRUCTION, OF INVENTION, OF ANALYSIS, WITH ROOM FOR DISAGREEMENT EVEN AMONG CLOSE COLLEAGUES, AND INEVITABLY ELEMENTS OF ARBITRARINESS OR CHANCE ASSIGNMENT. TO BELIEVE THAT WE CAN KNOW THE OPPONENT'S PAYOFFS WITH HIGH CONFIDENCE--THAT WE CAN REPRODUCE THE CORRESPONDING ANALYSIS AND CONSTRUCTION GOING ON ON HIS SIDE--IS TO DELUDE OURSELVES. But it is especially unrealistic to imagine that we do know his payoffs, and his assumptions on our payoffs; yet do not have a basis for fairly definite bets on his likely course of action! It would be very unusual to have this much knowledge about the opponent yet ~~remain ignorant~~ to have his choice of strategy remain entirely ambiguous.

Minimaxing implies either acting "as if" his choice were entirely ambiguous to us--which will generally imply low value for information (since the possible content of the information to be received will be regarded as highly ambiguous)--or acting "as if" we ~~were~~ had definite expectations corresponding to the "least favorable distribution"--which would imply 0 value for information, in a zero-sum game.

A more realistic approach would assume ~~were~~ expectations less definite than the latter (so that there is some chance--perhaps large--of receiving information of great value) and less ambiguous than the former (so that we have some definite estimate of the minimum chances of receiving useful information).